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ABSTRACT

The Elders Gathering on July 11-13, 1994, brought together 12 First Nations and Metis elders (all women) from 11 southern Saskatchewan communities to share their stories and to identify sociopolitical issues and their related learning needs. Throughout the spring and summer, the project coordinator traveled to First Nations and Metis communities to get to know the Elders and prepare for the Gathering. At these small meetings, the coordinator and the Elders started to identify what and how they wanted to learn based on their perspective. Evaluation and feedback processes were ongoing. Findings indicated that programs and services for the Elders must be developed in consultation with and with the participation of the Elders, and educational programs must be culturally appropriate and community based. Workshops were urgently required in many areas to meet the educational needs of the Elders, including the following: assisting them in writing programs to preserve their stories, legends, and languages and to contribute to their knowledge of their history; providing information on health issues, such as diabetes and tuberculosis; sharing knowledge on traditional medicines; discussing the issue of living on fixed incomes and sharing ideas on budgeting; and writing proposals and lobbying. The development of housing projects specific to the needs of Aboriginal Elders was urgently needed. (Appendixes include information from visits, and correspondence. Contains 10 references.) (YLB)

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"ELDERS' VISIONS"

THE SASKATCHEWAN OLDER ABORIGINAL ADULTS' LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT- PHASE ONE, FINAL REPORT

This project was sponsored by the Seniors Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina, in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Regina, Saskatchewan.

**with funding support from
Seniors Independence Program
Health Canada**

**Project Coordinator
Doris S. Young, BA (Hons.), M.P.A.**
September 1994

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H. Ethics Review Approval.

I. Older Aboriginal Adults' Learning Needs Assessment Mailing List.

J. Facilitators

Acknowledgements:

In any critical undertaking no one person is responsible for its achievement and its completion; so it has been in the case of facilitating the Elders Gatherings during the summer of 1994 and producing this Report. Many dedicated people were involved in making the events successful, and many extraordinary people were involved in the Central Gathering at the Prairie Christian Training Center, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan itself. Without their participation and cooperation, the Gathering would not have happened.

The Coordinator gratefully acknowledges all of the Elders who participated in this Project. Some of these Elders attended the Central Gathering, others participated at the community level as I travelled to their communities and visited them. The Coordinator learned much from their wisdom and their stories. As always the Elder's vision of their future is intertwined with their concern for themselves as well as for the future generations - their children and their grandchildren.

A relevant quotation is taken from the Fourth National Indian Conference on Aging indicates:

> **It seems that our modern enlightened society has drifted away from some of the basic values which have made our nations strong. The home, the family unit, the practice of our spiritual beliefs and respect for the land all seem to have gone by the wayside. One of the last strongholds of the tried and true values which make a people great is the community. The Aboriginal people have held tenaciously to its time honored traditions and values because they know the worth of these traditions and values. In any setting, who is responsible for the teaching and preservation of these values which are so essential to the survival of people, tribes and nations? In the Aboriginal community it has been the elders. (Indian Elders: A Tribute: The Fourth National Indian Conference on Aging, Reno, Nevada, 1982).**

This project started its momentum at the first and second Learning Unlimited Conference sponsored by the Seniors' Education Centre, University of Regina, in Regina, Saskatchewan, during 1990 and 1991. Seniors' and other delegates came from the Province of Saskatchewan to voice their concerns and to make recommendations for the benefit of other adults and their learning benefit. Grace Hatfield, a Metis elder representing the Gabriel Dumont Institute and Bill Logan, a staff member from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, University of Regina, voiced the concern they felt in not having the learning needs of their people met. Both Grace and Bill wanted improvements made in the providing of learning opportunities for and with older Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.

Dr. John Oussoren, Director of the Seniors Education Centre was the dreamer of the project. His conviction about the importance of the ideas presented by Grace Hatfield and Bill Logan, kept the process moving. John provided the overall direction, supervision and support for the project.

Ruth Blaser, Coordinator of the Crosscultural Intergenerational Grandmothers Project, Senior Education Centre, provided guidance and friendship that supported me along the way. She wrote the initial and successful proposal that led to the project, Elders Gathering. She provided day to day programming support and supervision.

Thanks is extended to the Advisory Committee, Liz Troyer and Norma Jean Dubray Byrd, Elders Bette Spence and Clara Pasqua whose knowledge, good judgement, patience and commitment proved to be my source of energy and inspiration. I learned the geography of southern Saskatchewan from them and through their kind instructions I also learned to work effectively by consensus.

Thanks goes to the people who welcomed me into their communities and homes. I was a stranger who knew Cree and some of their cultural ways. They helped me find the courage to continue when I sometimes felt uncertain about what I was doing. Many invited me to share a meal with them which, according to Aboriginal custom, means welcoming and acceptance. These people are:

Jean Goodwill, Standing Buffalo Indian Reserve.
Lorraine Yaccuzippi, Standing Buffalo Indian Reserve.
Albert Isaac, Councillor, Ochapowace Indian Reserve.
Evelyn Isaac, Ochapowace Indian Reserve.
Elder Clara Pasqua, Pasqua Indian Reserve.
Elder Bette Spence, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Regina, University of Regina.
Irma Taylor, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Regina.
Josephine Ross, Fort Qu'Appelle.

I'm grateful to the staff at the Senior's Education Centre, Heather Cosman, Mitzi Krasilowez and Stan Vindevoghel, who guided me through the many channels of bureaucracy at the University of Regina. They also gave me comradeship which I appreciated. Thanks to Mitzi who had the responsibility of ensuring that the final document was ready for the printers.

Thanks to, Norma Dietz who patiently combed through the Report and gave her comments and ideas. To my husband Wally McKenzie who lived without me for four months while I was immersed in this project.

Acknowledgements goes to Esther Sanderson, Dean, Extension and Northern Operations, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, University of Regina. Her knowledge about the Aboriginal culture provided me with many insights that were helpful to writing the report from an Aboriginal perspective.

Finally I wish to acknowledge Health Canada for its funding support. Without these funds, the Elders Gathering would not have happened. Our work together and our happy memories would still be waiting in the wind.

SASKATCHEWAN OLDER ABORIGINAL ADULTS' LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT "ELDER'S VISIONS"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Elders Gathering on July 11, 12, 13, 1994, at the Prairie Christian Training Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, brought together twelve First Nations and Metis elders from eleven southern Saskatchewan communities, one staff member from the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and one staff member from the Senior Education Centre .

The two and a half day event was sponsored by the Seniors' Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina, in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and the Gabriel Dumont Institute with funding support from the Seniors' Independence Program, Health Canada.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1994 the coordinator travelled to First Nations and Metis communities in order to get to know the Elders and to prepare for the related Gathering. The event was as much a celebration of the significant work elders do, as it was a time to sit and talk and enjoy good food in the company of each other. The Gathering was also a time for the Elders to take a rest from their everyday tasks. As well, the Elders had the opportunity to spend time together identifying their socio-political issues and their related learning needs.

The Elders who attended the Gathering came from both rural and urban areas. They have all made valuable social,, economic, educational and political contributions to their families and communities throughout their lives. They placed family and community responsibilities before any personal economic gain. These responsibilities include

caring for children, grandchildren and sometimes fostering children, as well as the daily domestic responsibilities of home life. In addition to this important work, they were active in their communities, providing traditional education to schools and advice to the Aboriginal leadership. They provide spiritual guidance and emotional support to community members. They serve on Committees and Boards representing their communities.

Throughout their life they willingly share their knowledge, skills and time in support of community betterment and with the hope that the children and grandchildren will have a more secure future.

They are proud of their voluntary contributions, however, they find that at this time in their lives they do not have adequate compensation for their life long work. This makes them very sad and fearful.

They identified health, medical care, better housing conditions and transportation as critical areas to improve their health and social conditions. Advocacy for their health and social issues is essential. They require a respite from the responsibility of child care as many Elders care for children. They also identified educational opportunities to enable them to continue to preserve their culture, language and legends. For example, writing workshops, story telling and literacy skills. They want to learn how to record their history and to learn about contemporary issues so that they can continue to provide guidance to the Aboriginal leadership. They require adequate funding to meet these educational needs.

It is critical that education for the Elderly is available to assist them in leading a full and satisfying life and to better equip them to continue to contribute to their families and communities.

In developing these services, educational programming must be accessible and culturally appropriate. Priorities must be set in partnership with the Elders. Research and methodologies have to be adapted to meet the cultural and political realities of the Elders' lives.

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Research and Literature:

This project has it roots in a study titled Unmet Needs of Off-Reserve Indian and Metis Elderly in Saskatchewan prepared by the Saskatchewan Senior Citizens Council, 1988. This report indicated:

- that the social, health and educational needs of this population are unmet,

- that the formal educational level of most of the Metis and First Nations elderly is very low or non-existent,

- education was seen as an important vehicle to bring about change and to provide support required by the Elders,

- that most of this population live in poverty and in substandard housing, and receive inadequate health and medical services,

- that "it can be hypothesized that one of the most critical problems facing the Native Elderly is the loss of continuity in their lives", meaning that the Elders often have to leave home and their familiar surroundings in order to find decent housing, as well health and medical services,

- that elders carry a major role in passing on cultural traditions, and

- many continue the tradition of caring for grandchildren in an extended family setting.

These findings were also confirmed by means of:

- the limited research literature that has been published in the area of the elderly First Nation and Metis people. (Vindevoghel, 1992; Blanchford, Chappell, 1990, Young, 1985; National Tribal Chairmen Association, 1982, 1980, 1976 Murdock Schwartz, 1978; and Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, 1977 and 1976.)

- conversations with First Nations and Metis people,

- conversations with staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

1.2 Demographics:

Although the statistics used are for the reserve population, these figures and findings can be generalized to include the Metis population.

According to the 1986 Canadian Census, there are 77,650 Aboriginal people living in Saskatchewan with 57,372 living on Saskatchewan reserves in 1988. (Nilson, Weaver, 1988). This figure indicates that approximately one in every thirteen Saskatchewan resident identifies as being of Aboriginal origin.

Little is known of the Aboriginal elderly population however there are some important areas that can be noted.

- As shown in Figure 1, this population age structure on Saskatchewan reserves indicates a significant difference in the age structure between the Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal population in that there is a high "youthful" population and a very low elderly population. This age structure is in direct contrast to the non-Aboriginal population.

- the youthful Aboriginal population can continue to provide care to the elderly for a longer period of time than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

- the Aboriginal elders today, however, have an overwhelming responsibility in providing care to the children, as well as advising and supporting the youth.

To be an elder today is overwhelming. The work they are responsible for continues to be critical in that so few of them are expected to provide guidance and advise to such a large population.

-Learning institutions and educational program planners must take note of the urgency to begin working with Aboriginal Elders in meeting their educational and related needs.

-there is an equal proportion of older male and female survival rate in the Aboriginal population. Educational programs must therefore reflect both male and female needs.

2. ABORIGINAL OLDER ADULT LEARNING NEEDS IDENTIFICATION ISSUES:

2.1 The Need:

Of this project one Elder said that,

> We are the "kokoms" and "mosoms", (grannies and grandpas). We are the one who look after others and often raise our grandchildren. We are the ones who try to teach and pass on our ways to the younger generation. It would be nice if there was something that was for us, a place where we could talk and learn.

2.2 The Content:

The Elder also said that, if a program was developed to meet the Elder's educational needs, it would be important to also consider the Elder's social and economic issues, cultural values, and their traditional roles, one of which is caring for grandchildren. Vindevoghel (1992), Chappel (1990), and Young (1985) indicated that social, economic and cultural needs, including language were critical factors in any undertaking to meet the needs of the Elders. Language and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and traditions became important factors when considering a coordinator for this particular project.

2.3 Learning Needs Identification and Assumptions:

In planning this project, a basic assumption was that the Elders were very capable of stating what they need to learn and how they wanted to learn. All aspects of the project were planned so that the participants could identify for themselves what and how they wanted to learn. Key to this project was finding culturally

appropriate settings, processes and leadership that facilitated the related learning needs assessments.

2.4 The Visiting Approach or Method:

Consistent with these assumptions, a series of visits with the Elders in their communities were initiated over a period of four months in eleven Aboriginal communities (ten in the south and one in northern Saskatchewan). These meetings involved talking with individuals or small groups or local gatherings at places where the Elders were most comfortable. The visiting approach honored the oral traditions of the Aboriginal cultures, as well as applying culturally appropriate processes. These visits were in preparation of the final goal of a central Gathering where twelve Elders came together for two and a half days to share their stories, talk about their needs in general, and learning needs in particular.

This process allowed the coordinator, as well as the Elders, the opportunity to get to know one another.

At each of these small gatherings the coordinator and the Elders would start to:

a. identify what they wanted to learn and,
b. how they wanted to learn these things based on the Elders' perspective.

2.5 Feedback Process and Evaluation

Evaluation and feedback processes were on-going throughout each segment of the project so that the program could respond in appropriate ways to the

Figure 1

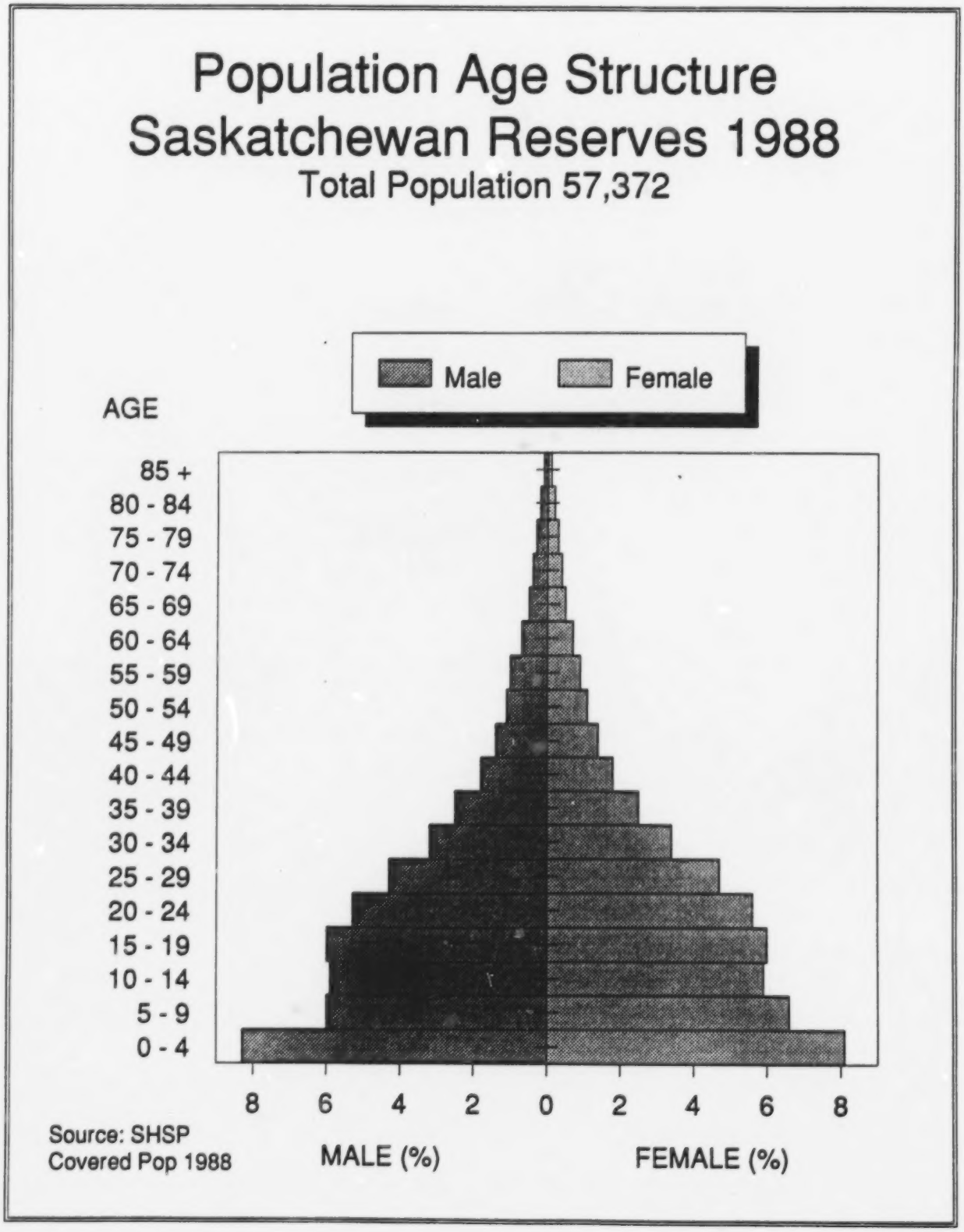

Figure 1

Elders' needs. Particular focus was given to the setting, language, approach or process and leadership.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

One objective was for the Seniors Education Centre to hire a coordinator who would work with an Advisory Committee in order to advise and complete the tasks involved in initiating the two and a half day Gathering.

Another objective was to develop detailed plans for the Gathering. Selection of the participants for the Gathering was to be done by the Committee, in consultation with the community contact and the project coordinator.

The last objective was to prepare a final report with particular attention given to identifying learning and related needs from the local Gatherings as well from the central Gathering.

The Report will be distributed to the participants of the central Gathering, institutional stakeholders, as well as to potential funders of the future phases of the project.

4. THE PATH FOLLOWED:

In April 1994, Doris Young, a Cree from the Lac la Ronge Band was hired by the Seniors Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina as coordinator of the project. Doris had done some work with Elders in Winnipeg in creating an Elders' meeting place and in 1985, she directed a Needs Assessment for a Senior Citizens' housing project in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her interest in working with the Elders' learning needs project stemmed from her past involvement and personal need to be involved with people that she cares deeply about. Working with the Elders was

always a rich and rewarding experience and she felt that this project was particularly critical. The Elders are always willing to give and to teach. Here was a project that was responding to the learning needs of Elders and Doris was willing to work with the Elders to create learning opportunities that would respond to their educational desires.

The first task of the coordinator was to establish an Advisory Committee representative of Aboriginal Elders and included some of the original Advisory members involved in the project application process as well as representatives from the three educational institutions involved: the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Seniors' Education Centre. The Committee was established to provide advice to the coordinator for the Gathering so that it would reflect the needs of the Metis and First Nations' Elderly.

The Project Advisory Committee members were:
Elder Bette Spence, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

Liz Troyer, staff member, Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Norma Jean Dubray-Byrd, staff member, Circle Project, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Elder Clara Pasqua, Pasqua First Nation, and part time advisor to the Crosscultural Intergenerational Project, Fort Qu'Appelle.

Four months of planning and working together with the Advisory Committee went into the preparation of the central Gathering. The overall direction came from John Oussoren,

day to day support from Ruth Blaser and advice from the Advisory Committee. The latter person provided advice throughout the entire process including recommendations about participants and site selection, developing the agenda and the theme for the Gathering, as well as in the selection of the facilitators.

The Advisory Committee wanted the Gathering to provide the Elders with an experience of being "catered to", an experience they rarely have. For a few days they could relax and enjoy themselves. One elder commented on how much she enjoyed the services and the meals. She couldn't remember the last time someone cooked for her.

To ensure the success of the Gathering every detail was considered important to make the two and a half days meaningful for the Elders. This central Gathering also said "thank you" for all the unselfish work performed by the Elders as part of their daily routines, while also helping them to identify their learning needs.

Elders will go only to places they feel safe and in which mutual respect can be shared by all involved, therefore great care was given in selecting the site of the central Gathering. Comfort was a very important consideration. The Committee wanted a location where the Elders could feel good about being there. The Prairie Christian Training Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, was chosen from four or five possible locations. This place was selected for its beautiful setting, its climate of informality, warmth and willingness to accommodate the Elders. The Advisory Committee was quite confident that the Elders would be happy and comfortable in this setting. Even though the Training Centre is owned and operated by a religious organization, there is no obvious sense of religious air about the Centre.

The menu was also given due weight. The Elders needs and food preferences were considered in meal selection. Nutrition and traditional foods were in order. It was very satisfying to hear the comments the Elders made about each meal they ate. The effort made was not wasted.

Time was spent brainstorming on ideas for an appropriate theme. The Advisory Committee and the project coordinator wanted the theme to properly reflect the purpose of the central Gathering. Each idea was carefully discussed before a decision was made on the title. The theme of the central Gathering became "Elders' Visions".

The facilitators were carefully selected. The Committee felt it was important to employ facilitators that were First Nation or Metis, or someone who was familiar with the Elders. Irma Taylor of the Gabriel Dumont Institute and Ruth Blaser from the Seniors Education Centre, as well as the project coordinator became the facilitators for the Gathering. All of the facilitators had previously worked with Elders, were sensitive to their needs and were interested in the work of the Project.

4.1 Travels to Aboriginal Communities

Throughout the spring and summer the Coordinator travelled to ten communities that were identified by the Advisory Committee.

The communities visited were:

First Nations Communities:

Ochapowace Indian Band
Starblanket Indian Band
Peepeekisis Indian Band

Standing Buffalo Indian Band

Metis Communities:

Marcelin, Saskatchewan
Lebret, Saskatchewan
Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan
Lestock, Saskatchewan
Regina, Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
(see Figure 2 for locations)

The purpose of the community visits was to get to know the Elders in their home settings, and also to share information about the project. The Coordinator wanted to know their local or personal issues and how this Gathering could best meet their particular needs. Every effort was made to get to know the Elders who would be coming to the central Gathering in order to build trust and credibility of the project. Before each visit, telephone calls were made, and then a visit or two took place at the home of the Elder or at an agreed upon location. At the first meeting, information was provided to the Elder about the purpose of the visit. Much time was spent getting to know the Elder. Sometimes the Elders and the coordinator went for coffee or for lunch together in order to spend some casual time together. Always, always, the coordinator did what was comfortable for the Elder. For instance, if an Elder was feeling poorly, the coordinator did not spend very much time visiting, but promised to return at a time that was more suitable. If the Elders were able to leave the house and travel to a nearby town, this was done. Some of the Elders from First Nations communities live on farms and are isolated if they do

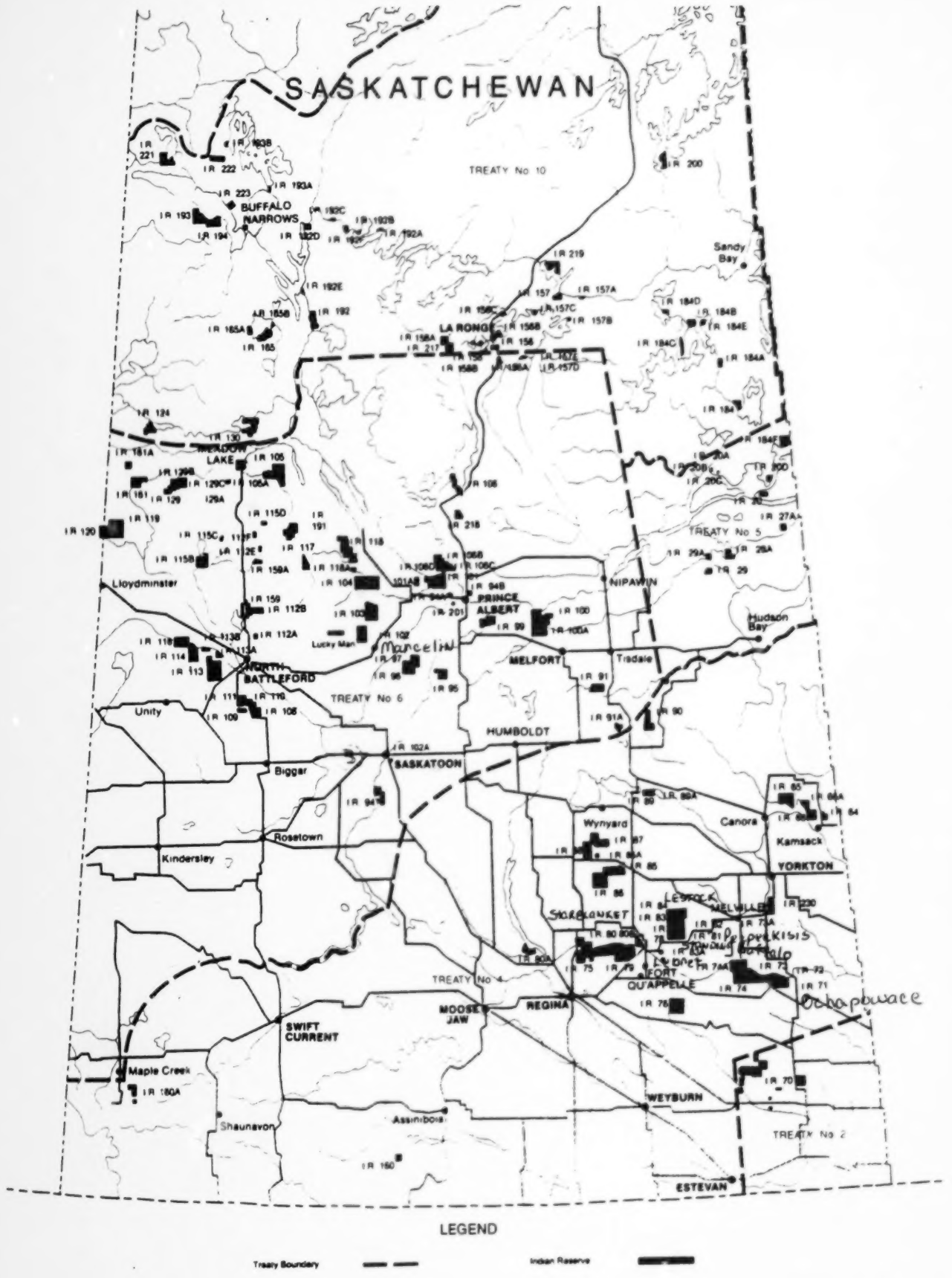

Figure 2

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not have cars. Getting out of the house and going to eat in a restaurant proved to be a happy occasion for them. If they wanted to pick up a friend, this request was taken and the friend came along. Many happy moments were spent talking about "the way it was", and about the activities the Elders performed in their communities and their concerns about their lives in general. Written material (Appendices A & B) about the project was left with the Elder so that they could read it at their leisure if they wanted to. Some information about the coordinator and her previous experience in working with the Elders was also given. Before leaving the Elders were informed that if they wanted to talk or if they had any concerns they could phone the coordinator collect. The coordinator often went back for another visit in order to get more familiar with the Elders. The coordinator wanted to ensure that the Elders would feel comfortable at the Gathering, should they decide to attend. The coordinator's knowledge of the Cree language was helpful, and most were delighted about this, even though many Elders now speak only English.

4.2 Financial Barriers and Solutions

Financial considerations have often been a barrier that has kept the Elders from participating in workshops and meetings. Filling out an expense form and waiting for up to six weeks for repayment causes hardships. Elders do not have cash available to pay for their expenses. Most of them live on fixed incomes. The demands on Elders income include: children, grandchildren's needs, and living in extended family systems with often limited access to money.

When the Elders do not attend due to a lack of finances much valuable Elder information is lost as their voices are not heard. Moreover decisions concerning their lives are made by someone else.

In order to ensure that the Elders participated at the central Gathering, a different approach in the way expenses were paid to the Elders had to be found. The focus became how to get the cash for elder travel reimbursement to the central Gathering. Cash advance for travel expenses is not the University's normal administrative procedure; therefore documentation had to be provided for this unusual procedure. The argument for cash advance was not persuasive enough. However, Seniors' Education Centre staff were able to creatively solve this difficulty at least in the short term. These efforts were worth the struggle. One Elder who came from northern Saskatchewan, travelled six hours and had car problems. She barely managed to get to the Gathering. On her arrival she was physically and emotionally exhausted from the experience. When she received prompt cash reimbursement for travel expenses, she was very relieved. She could participate in the Gathering without worrying about finances and car repair costs.

The coordinator's past experience in working with the Elders was also to secure a "per diem" to the Elders for attending meetings. This "per diem" was paid to the Elders in the same way that consultants are paid by the University to provide advice. Aboriginal organizations have long recognized the valuable knowledge, information, insight and direction the Elders give when they attend meetings and educational workshops, thus honorarium and travel or accommodation in cash for Elders was an integral part

in this central Gathering. It is hoped than an honorarium would be paid to participating Elders in future gatherings for sharing their knowledge.

4.3 Differences in Approach to First Nation and Metis Communities.

Getting to know the Elders in their various community settings was a fascinating process. The coordinator found that the approach to the First Nation and to Metis communities had to be different. It was again a different process meeting with Elders in the City of Regina.

4.4 First Nations Communities and Existing Educational and Cultural Programming:

Before entering a First Nation community telephone calls were made to the governing band offices to request entrance into the community. The coordinator respected this protocol and was always well received. After the phone calls were made to the Band Administration offices, the Band Counsellor in charge of the Elders programs arranged an Elders meeting. A date, time and place was arranged after the Counsellor consulted with the elders with respect to their availability. Sometimes the meeting was specifically arranged because the coordinator was coming and sometimes she was part of the agenda of a regular Elders meeting. She was always made to feel welcome and was asked to stay for the rest of the meeting if she wanted to. She did. A meal was generally provided to the Elders after the meetings and the coordinator was always invited to these meals.

The coordinator found that some of the First Nations communities have developed programs for the Elders. These programs include information on health and related issues. The Elders on the other hand also provide services to the community. Some examples are: language services to the schools, foster home placements for children and advisors to the Council. The Elders also raise funds for events such as pow wows and Indian Days in their communities. They are an extremely busy group and their organizational skills are phenomenal. They are dedicated to their communities and are always concerned about what the youth and children are doing.

4.5 Metis communities:

In order to meet the Metis Elders, the Gabriel Dumont Institute representatives and other Metis people were contacted about Metis people living in the communities that were identified by the Advisory Committee. Once the coordinator had names, telephone calls were made to the individuals to see if they could be visited. When making calls the Elders were told who gave their name so that the coordinator could establish trust and some confidence about the purpose of the call. It required a few phone calls before visiting the Elder.

Once reaching the Elder's home, time was spent getting acquainted, sharing ideas about the project and what they thought about the Gathering. The Metis Elders, like the First Nations Elders also look after children and grandchildren, and are equally as community-minded. They participate on community boards, speaking on behalf of the Metis people who live in their towns or surrounding area. However, unlike a First Nations community where only First

Nations issues are considered, the Metis have to keep a watchful eye to ensure that decisions are made in favour of Metis people when they sit on boards consisting of both Metis and non-Metis people. Many stories were relayed about their dedication and the long hours of work spent on community work.

The different approaches in entering First Nations' and Metis communities and the protocol required was very interesting, and important to know. The First Nations communities appear to employ a more formal approach when one is entering the community for business reasons. This formality provides a certain bond for the community members not found anywhere else. The Metis, on the other hand, do not have this formal process for entering their community or town. There is however a deep friendship between the Metis people in their communities which has been established over the years.

4.6 <u>The City of Regina:</u>

Reaching the Elders in the City of Regina required another approach. The coordinator visited the Circle Project where counselling and educational services are provided to Aboriginal people. An Elders' group meet at the Circle Project once a week. The coordinator went every week from April to June, to visit with the Elders. The Elders sometimes played cards and visited with one another. There were generally a few Elders who came to meet with the project coordinator. They were never the same ones from week to week. Sometimes there were no Elders. The inconsistency was due to a number of reasons: it was spring/summer and they were going other places, the driver who picked them up was not reliable; he came late and so

they stopped relying on him; they did not feel that the place belonged to them as they kept being moved from room to room when space was required. In these moves, they had lost their sewing machines, or someone had damaged them. They felt discouraged. The coordinator however talked to the Elders about the project every week that she went. She left them information and then told them that they could call if they wanted to talk during the week, or they could talk when she returned the following week. Two Elders called and wanted information on the Project and said that they would pass the information on to their friends. Another two Elders who called wanted information specifically on the central Gathering.

5. FINDINGS OF OUR TRAVELS

The coordinators' visits took her to ten communities throughout Southern Saskatchewan and to one Northern Saskatchewan community. Much information was learned from these Elders. One of the more valuable lessons learned is that "community based" and "culturally appropriate" are not just words. When given life, community-based and culturally appropriate are meaningful and create a sense of ownership to those involved. They build trust and harmony and give hope to the people. For instance visiting with the Elders in their familiar surroundings proved to be good practice and created trust. Most of the work was done on a person to person basis. All of the visits took place in the Elders' communities. If a meeting took place it was arranged by the community. The coordinator always viewed herself as someone who came to learn and share and that she was a guest in the company of very special people.

Meeting the Elders in their own familiar territory and speaking in their own language when necessary was critical to the learning needs identification journey being a successful one. Verbal communication and dialogue are the best medicine for forming friendships and earning trusting relationships with the Elders. Knowledge of their culture and traditions proved invaluable to understand the losses of these remarkable people. Some understanding of this loss and its meaning to the Elders may be helpful by looking at the impact history has had on Aboriginal traditions.

5.1 Historical Roles of Elders:

Prior to European colonization the roles and responsibilities of the Elders were clear. By the time they reached old age, their life long experiences, work, and responsibilities ensured this clarity. Most men and women were competent in a wide range of tasks appropriate to their gender. Both men and women gained expertise in many tasks that were useful to the people and their nations. Occupational skills, political leadership and artistic abilities were viewed not just as a matter of natural talent but as gifts from the Creator. Although much of their work did not involve full time labour, each person was competent in their areas of work. Some roles however did require full time attention. Medicine men/women, healers, and those who carried spiritual information were required to carry out their duties on a full time basis. These gifted and talented ones came by their roles through various ways, for instance, medicine men and women were not appointed, nor did they actively seek the honour. Rather these roles eventually became clear to the individual and those who knew them. The Creator, gave them special talents of healing, or of control over the manifestations of nature. To carry out the

responsibilities of these roles, however, required many years of rigorous training and guidance under the supervision of their Elder teachers so that the information would be accurately passed on to the next generation. The skills they possessed were complex. Those who became political leaders also required training because skilled leaders were critical to the healthy maintenance of a nation.

Over the past one hundred years, the Elders' esteemed positions in society have deteriorated. A major reason is that the Elders' roles and responsibilities are not as clear as they once were. This is due to the Canadian government's assimilation policies, the residential school system and Christianity. The assimilation policies disrupted the political and social systems, the residential school disrupted the family system, and Christianity introduced other religious teaching to the Aboriginal people.

Today many Elders find it difficult to advise their political leaders because they do not always understand the "white" political system. Language is sometimes a problem because some Elders no longer speak their languages. Some elders do not practise the traditional spiritual ceremonies. Indeed many have said that even their grandparents did not practise these traditions. Most of the Elders are now Christians. In the assimilation process, much historical information about Elders traditional roles has been lost. With these changes and losses, uncertainty prevails amongst the Elders about their roles.

5.2 Information Gathered From Community Visits: (Appendix C)

Elders responsibilities are many and varied. The Elders work in many different areas. In the four months spent with the Elders the coordinator found that their work is as varied as there are Elders. They said they were involved in the following: advising, counselling, educating, talking and sharing information on traditions and culture, teaching language, and raising grandchildren. In talking about their work they had questions about the words that the non-Aboriginal society uses to identify what they do.
These questions are: What is the function of an Elder?

What is a story-teller? a healer? a traditionalist? an educator? Does one have to have certain knowledge to have any of these roles? What knowledge do they need?

No satisfactory answers to these fundamental questions were found. However, it seems rather clear that the dominant society has used English words to define the work of Elders. The Elders have not participated in the defining of their, otherwise these wise and intelligent people would not have to ask such basic questions.

The following key Elders' roles were identified:
1) Advisory :

Elders attend band council meetings and conferences and advises on political matters on topics such as self-government, women's role in the political process and child welfare issues.

2) Child Rearing :

Most these Elders continued the time-honoured and traditional practise of caring for grandchildren and fostering other children.

3) Counsellor :

Much of the work performed in counselling by these Elders is done in public schools. Recently this activity has flourished. Sometimes the counselling involves talking to an angry student with the expectation that the Elders restore harmony to the situation.

4) <u>Educator :</u>

Sometimes these Elders are asked to attend cultural days to pass on information of a traditional nature to schools, to workshops/conferences, and to church gatherings. Story-telling is another way in which the Elders educate the young. Some Elders recall staying up late at night when stories were being told during the winter months. Today, these same Elders continue this practice for their grandchildren. Others perform the duties of teaching the language in the schools. These are the Elders who risked ridicule, punishment and beatings in order to be able to pass the language down to the youth. The Canadian government's effort to eradicate the Aboriginal languages through its assimilation policy and boarding school system did not deter these Elders' determination to retain their languages. By retaining their languages these Elders have helped to keep the culture alive.

5) Traditions, Culture and Aboriginal Spirituality:

Elders talked about their culture in terms of what their families and friends were doing. If culture is defined as a "way of life", the culture of the people is still very much alive and much of this is carried on through the traditions. Evidence lies in their everyday conversations relating to ceremonies that someone attended (Appendix D). Ceremonies such as the raindance, sundances and give-aways associated with these sacred ceremonies. Other conversations related to pipe ceremonies, firekeeping with respect to the sweat lodges, various spiritual feasts, Flowers Day where the communities take care of the graves of the departed ones, wakes and funerals, greetings of the Thunderbirds that are always associated with a thunderstorm, the importance of balance in their lives and the ever popular summer activity of pow-wows. There is a sense of ambiguity about their knowledge about the definition of culture. To those who know the culture, this information was not just words, they are the proof that the traditions of the people are still strong. The importance of this information cannot be undermined or ignored. Traditional ceremonies both large and small, remain, and are growing stronger in many areas. However, not everyone participates in all of these ceremonies, but many still practice some of them. Sometimes Elders have said that culture is dead, but their conversations contradict those words.

6) Concerns About Elders' Roles:

In their many roles, Elders often feel a sense of overwhelming responsibility and sometimes they feel inadequate to fulfill the varied functions they are asked to perform. They said that in order to continue to

maintain these roles they need information on history, health and contemporary issues. They require adequate finances for daily existence, decent housing and transportation. An important consideration for these Elders is the development of an Elders Code of Ethics, to enable them to work together with appropriate guidelines.

The Elders are at very different educational levels. A few have attended University and then lost their Treaty status. The Indian Act legalized this process because the Canadian government's assimilation process felt that those who attained a university degree were considered "civilized." Some are illiterate but have effectively managed their lives in their homes. Most have not reached high school or were not encouraged by the school system to complete high school. One Elder said that she only stayed in school long enough to learn her catechism. She was then discouraged from continuing her education.

Because of their age, all Elders have gained knowledge through life-experience. This is what makes them so special and valuable - the knowledge they acquired from life. Their wisdom comes from having lived many years. Sharing their knowledge is important. However, they are not always sure about what is being asked of them. Unclear expectations causes anxiety and frustration. Therefore, clarity of these expectations are critical. Otherwise society's expectations of the Elders are unrealistic.

When requested to perform duties an offering of tobacco is also necessary for many of the Elders. But, as one Elder stated, "we cannot live on tobacco".

Therefore, an honorarium along with the tobacco is not only acceptable, but necessary.

Housing and medical services and transportation were also troublesome for the Elders. The removal of the drug plan initiated by the Saskatchewan Government has had a detrimental impact on their lives.

Poor social and health conditions confirm the effects colonization has had on these Elders. Advocacy in areas of health and social issues is required. Recognition of stress and respite from child care, early detection of health problems, the need for better housing conditions and adequate finances all require attention.

The Elders also want information on contemporary issues such as self-government, the Constitution, Treaty land entitlements, child welfare procedures and the effects Gaming has on their youth and communities.

Transportation problems existed in both rural and urban centres. Elders cannot always get around because they may be handicapped, they do not have vehicles, or they do not have the finances.

Throughout the process, there was a common element that was repeated by all Elders. Time was the common strand that weaved in and out of their conversations. They said they needed time to sit and talk. Time to get to know one another. Time to heal from their losses. Time to consider their learning needs.

6. FACTORS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PROGRAM PLANNING FOR AND WITH ABORIGINAL ELDERS

The Elders want to participate in the planning of their learning needs. Questions about the project process were asked: Where will this information be made available? Who will provide this information? Will it be provided in the community and at the local level? How will this information be developed? Will this information be developed with the participation of and in consultation with the elders? In what language will this information be given?

Programs must be accessible and culturally appropriate. This means they must be developed and priorities set in partnership with the elders. Research and methodologies have to be adapted to meet the cultural and political realities of the Elders' lives. Education for and with the elderly must be available to assist them in leading a full and satisfying life and to better equip them to continue to contribute to their families and communities. It is through this process that much can be given back to these wise, kind and knowledgeable members of the Aboriginal communities.

7. THE CENTRAL GATHERING

On July 11, 12, 13, 1994 the Elders' Central Gathering was held at the Prairie Christian Training Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. Twelve Elders and three staff participated in the gathering. Dr. Morris Maduro, Dean, University Extension and Dr. John Oussoren, Director, Seniors' Education Centre were noonhour guests.

The Advisory Committee developed a process for the Gathering that was easy to follow and one that did not involve a lot of work for everyone.

Sharing and participating in a friendly and non-threatening environment was critical. To meet this requirement a variety of methods were used to encourage the Elders to participate in all of the discussions; some work was done individually, some exercises were done with another person, and some exercises involved the whole group.
The Gathering began with an opening prayer (Appendix E). The Elders were then entertained with fiddle music by Metis Elder Marshall Poitras, from Fort Qu'Appelle. Because music is such a rich part of the Aboriginal culture the Elders were all delighted with the music, especially the Red River Jig, and with the knowledge that the music was "just for them".

Everyone sat in a circle. The Elders were provided with cushions and blankets. Smoking was not permitted in the room, so the elders who smoked gladly went outside for fresh air. It gave them time to sit and talk to one another apart from the gathering. All were happy with the arrangement.

Three questions were asked of the elders:

(1) What do you do in your community?
(2) What do you need to help you in your work? Priorize the importance of this list.
(3) Who do you think should be responsible for helping you meet your needs in the work you do?

These questions were designed to allow the Elders to reflect on their work whether it was in the home or in the community. They were then asked to prioritize these tasks and who would be responsible for what.

The Advisory Committee wanted the Elders to see for themselves the many important social, political, economic and spiritual contributions they make to their communities and to the lives of others. Everyone was surprised at what they do individually and amazed at what they do collectively. The list was impressive and everyone felt a sense of empowerment.
They are: caregivers, managers, housekeepers, hunters, gatherers, gardeners, chauffeurs for their children, maids, seamstresses, coaches, cooks, traditional healers, teachers, advisors, recognized Elders, organizers, politicians, artists, professionals as researchers, story-tellers, writers of biographies, history, legends and children's stories, actresses/performers.

Their community volunteer work is equally striking; they are trustees for educational institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and are board members for many organizations including libraries, minor hockey, church groups, training institutions such as the Kapacha Training Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle and political organizations like the Saskatchewan Metis Association. They also participate on an Aboriginal/RCMP committee to find ways to work together for a better community.

Although the process was exhilarating for them, in that they could see that together this small group accomplished much, and contributed in many ways to their communities. But these Elders also felt a sense of frustration and loss for all the many years of work they have given unselfishly. All of these participants without exception live in poverty. The realization that there is no pension or adequate remuneration for their work, at this time of their lives when they now need support made them heavy hearted. They said, "We have worked for no pay for 50-60 years of our lives, and now at our age we have no compensation."

The Elders are, however, not a group that dwells on pessimism. The resilience of the Elders can be found in the stories of their lives. One courageous woman shared her experiences. "I've had cancer four times and I've had four heart attacks and I've recovered from both of these illnesses." She then went on to University. At seventy years of age, she is still active in her community.

This resiliency can also leave quite quickly when tiredness sets in and there is a fragility about them that many people do not see. We found that rest after lunch was a must. In order to not overtire the Elders a two hour lunch break was initiated so that they could have a nap before resuming the afternoon activities. This practice was much appreciated by everyone.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Phase One of the project has begun the important educational process in participation with the Aboriginal Elders to identify the areas where they need help, including their learning requirements.

The Central Gathering was a worthwhile effort. The Seniors' Education Centre Project, in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and Gabriel Dumont Institute initiated contact with the Aboriginal communities and the Elders. This contact is a new and rewarding effort.

The community visits and the Central Gathering provided the Elders with a process to reflect, consider and decide together what they feel is important in their socio-political and educational requirements (Appendix F).

The community-based approach of going into the First Nations and Metis communities and meeting with the Elders in their territories was valuable. This process developed both trust and respect.

<u>The project learned that adult education has to be given in the context of the special and cultural needs of the Elders.</u> Financial approaches in the Aboriginal communities are, and, must be, different so that the Elders can participate in the educational programs.

The Elders contributed their vision at the community visits and at the Central Gathering. Now they are waiting for the educational institutions' response and the continuation to the process.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Programs and Services for the Elders must be developed in consultation and with the participation of the Elders.**

2. **Educational programs must be culturally appropriate and community-based.**

3. **Workshops are urgently required in many areas to meet the educational needs of the Elders; in writing programs to assist them to preserve their stories, their legends, their languages and to contribute their knowledge of their history; to provide information on health issues such as diabetes and tuberculosis as well as other health related topics; to share knowledge on traditional medicines; to discuss the issues of living on fixed incomes and share ideas on budgeting; and workshops on proposal writing and lobbying.**

4) **Many elders are illiterate and basic literacy and tutoring programs are needed.**

5) **Specific learning activities, educational projects: Tours, visiting other communities and getting to know where other Elders live, quilting, sewing, knitting, dancing, singing, holding tea parties and serving bannock and tea to raise money for projects; educational programs through the use of videos, establishing an Advisory Group to represent the Elders, and transportation for the Elders.**

Adequate resources must be found for these educational needs.

6) **The priority of the Central Gathering was for the Senior Education Centre, along with the Saskatchewan Indian**

Federated College and the Gabriel Dumont Institute, to begin developmental work on Elders educational needs and to secure adequate resources. Lobbying for funding has to be part of the developmental phase. A six month period was suggested for the completion of the developmental phase.

A follow up to this workshop was recommended.

As well, the development of an Advocacy Program is needed to help the Elders find the information they require in their daily lives. To illustrate, one Elder told a story of the outrageous hydro bill she had to pay when she was being subsidized, while a neighbour whose house was similar to hers in every respect paid half as much as she did. There appeared to be something amiss in this situation. This in one example of where an Advocate could have been useful in finding out the reason for this discrepancy.

7) The development of housing projects specific to the needs of Aboriginal Elders is urgently needed. Subsidized housing is required and this housing must be developed with a culturally appropriate approach. Elders feel the unjustness of having to leave their loved ones when they can no longer look after themselves. Being placed in Nursing Homes far away from home and in places where their cultural needs are not met is a frightening prospect for the Elders.

10. OTHER RESEARCH REQUIRED:

The participants at the Central Gathering were all women. Study is required on what will draw the men to various events because their learning needs are as important as women's learning needs.

Also from the Aboriginal perspective, there are different views about the stages that one travels from birth to old age. Sometimes this journey is called the "circle of life" and has the components of birth, youth, adulthood, and old age. Each stage comprises certain aspects of life experiences (Appendix G). Because much information on Aboriginal cultures has been obscured, this circular concept of the family, society and the complementarity of human generations requires further study.

11. CLOSING COMMENTS

Meeting the Elders and getting to know them on a personal level was the highlight of this project. Each Elder was special and brought many unique gifts and teachings to the Central Gathering. Although much time was spent on the highway travelling to the communities, getting there and listening to the Elders tell of their life-experiences was rewarding and gratifying.

First Nations and Metis Elders have been very patient and kind. The traditional teachings of patience and kindness has been upheld by these wise ones in every step of their lives. They have shared their knowledge and are respectful, but they are wanting more out of life than a bleak future. They wonder how those who are in charge of health services and pension funds would fare if they had to walk in their moccasins for even just seven days while living on the Elders' fixed incomes. What lessons could be learned if this situation were to occur for just a few days.

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Appendix A

SASKATCHEWAN OLDER ABORIGINAL ADULTS LEARNING PROJECT

The Saskatchewan Older Aboriginal Adults Learning Project is sponsoring a two day elders gathering for First Nations and Metis elders at the Prairie Christian Training Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle. The dates of the Gathering are July 11, 12 and 13/94.

The theme of the gathering is *Elder's Vision*, because the workshop will be bringing together approximately 20 elders to look at how we can work together on creating suitable learning environments in topics of interest.

This project is sponsored by the Senior's Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

An Advisory Committee was established to arrange this gathering. The Advisory Committee members are:

- **Elder Bette Spence, University of Regina, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.**
- **Liz Troyer, Gabriel Dumont Institute.**
- **Norma Jean Dubray-Byrd, Circle Project, Regina, Saskatchewan.**
- **Elder Clara Pasqua, Pasqua First Nation.**
- **The Coordinator of the Project is Doris Young.**

The reason this project began is because First Nations and Metis elders needs have been neglected. Yet, in spite of this unfair situation the First Nations and Metis elders have continued to provide the communities with valuable leadership and important advise and are always there when they are needed. We believe that we need to give something back to these generous and wise people. Perhaps this gathering will be the start of a journey of discovery where elders and the educational institutions can work together to seek out ways of how to support the learning needs of the elders. Perhaps this gathering will also provide the direction of how that process can begin. We are excited about the possibility of being able to give back something in return for the many years of work the elders have provided to the communities. We hope that these two days will be a celebration of the elders many accomplishments.

We want the gathering to at least offer a relaxing two days where elders can get to know one another, share food and ideas, and recall some good memories in an atmosphere of warmth and friendship.

If you want any more information please contact:
Doris Young, Project Co-ordinator,
Aboriginal Older Adult Learning Project,
University Extension, University of Regina.
She can be reached at telephone no. 779-4889, or
Fax 779-4825

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

SENIORS' EDUCATION CENTRE

June 22, 1994

Dear Participant:

The Advisory Committee of the Saskatchewan Older Aboriginal Adults Learning Project would like to invite you to an elders small gathering on *July 11 (evening) 12, and 13/94 at the Prairie Christian Training Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.*

We have called the gathering "Elders' Visions", because we will be exploring ways in which we can work together to assist in developing possible learning environments for First Nations and Metis elders.

We hope that within the two days we spend together we will be able to find out what will help both the University and the First Nations and Metis elders to make learning enjoyable and fun.

As part of the gathering much time will be spent on getting to know one another and celebrating the work that elders do in the communities. There will also be time for relaxation and fun activities.

I am enclosing the proposed agenda. We will be responsible for your travel and your room and board. Please let us know if you require transportation as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please call me collect at 779-4889.

In peace and friendship.

Doris Young,
Project Coordinator

Enclosure

GA 106 GALLERY BLDG., COLLEGE AVENUE & CORNWALL STREET, REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA S4S 0A2 PHONE (306) 779-4876 FAX (306) 779-4878

Appendix C

Information and ideas about Aboriginal Elders' possible learning needs gathered from visits:

by Doris Young, April 27/94.

1. Aboriginal society's expectation of Aboriginal Elders

We expect a lot from our elders, and they are always willing to fulfill what they are being asked to do. However sometimes they are not always sure about the methods, or the information that they are expected to give. This may cause some anxiety and frustration on their part. Because they are always willing to give of their time and their knowledge we must make this process as easy and as enjoyable, as possible.

2. Sharing the role and providing a vehicle if required, and as required, by the elders.

We can give back to these wise, kind and knowledgeable elders by working with them in the development of ways in which to make their jobs and responsibilities easier.

These are some thoughts that I have collected from some of the elders that I have spoken to.

3. Health Needs:

3.1 Information and detection of Health Related Issues. Do they need this information? What kind of information would be useful to them to detect illness at an early stage? Do people need help to get to the doctor?

3.2 What about Prescription Drugs?
Do they know what they are taking? How much to take? When to take the drugs? Do they need someone to go with them for an explanation about

their drugs? Do they want to know what these drugs are that they are taking, ie. what are they supposed to do for the person.

3.3 Information on Nutrition
What are healthy foods to eat? What are the realities of getting nutritions foods at the local store? How can one eat to remain healthy in their later years?

3.4 Physical exercises -
How much? What kind? What are the benefits? Would they like to know how to develop a exercise club in their communities? Is exercise an activity they would like more of.

3.5 Mental and emotional needs -
Is there somewhere the elders can go to talk when they need to talk to someone? What kind of quiet time do they need for themselves?

4. Care of Grandchildren:

What are the responsibilities in caring for grandchildren?

What do the elders need to enhance this role?

Do they need information on children's developmental stages? ie. at four years the child level of understanding is this.....
or

Questioning why this particular child is not doing so well in school? Maybe they have poor eye sight, or have a hearing problem which hampers learning.

Because many elders take care of grandchildren, do they have relief from this responsibility such as having a morning off for themselves? Do they want some time to themselves? Can they detect when they themselves are tired and need rest? What can be done to get this much needed rest?

5. Elder Role:

What is the function of an elder?

What is a story teller? Does one have to have certain knowledge to have an elders' role? Can these roles be identified?

Do the elders want to do this identification? Do they need a process in which to do this?

6. Advisory Role:

What does this mean to the elder?

What skills does one need to act as an advisor on political issues? on governmental issues? on legal issues?.

What do they need to enhance these role?

Are all of these roles similar.

Does one need information on these various roles? Like facts on certain issues or statistics on others, or does it require reading syllabics or reading orthography?.

Will the information come from the elders themselves?

What setting can be used to talk about these roles and their responsibilities?

What is required to enhance this role?

7. Elementary, high school and university student contact

What do elders do at these schools?

What is required to enhance this function?

What do elders require to get to these schools?

Do they need a methods course on how to present some of their material?

8. Developing a Elders Code of Ethics

What is a code of ethics?

Why is it needed? Is it needed?

If its needed or wanted, what will this code of ethics say?

Who will develop this elders' code of ethics?

Who will be involved in this development? What role will women/men have in this development?

Is it a good idea to think about an elders' code of ethics?

9. Projects that may be useful to the elders:

Tours - visiting other communities and getting to know where other elders, where they live, etc.

Quilting, sewing, knitting, dancing, singing

Holding a tea party and serving bannock and tea

Educational projects through the use of Video

Establishing an Advisory Group to represent the elders needs

Transportation for elders is an issue

driving lessons

carrying bag of some kind to hold their information

10. Other Considerations:

How will this information be developed? In participation and consultation with the elders?

Where will this information be provided?
Will it be provided in the community? at the local level?
Will it be community based?

Who will provide this information?
Will it be Aboriginal people? Will it be the University?
Will it be a cooperative effort?

In what language will this information be given?

Appendix D

INFORMATION FROM THE VISITS I HAVE MADE TO THE ABORIGINAL ELDERS:

BY: DORIS YOUNG

DATE: JUNE 15, 1994.

Language:

Elders in all the communities I have visited, including the ones in Regina and Saskatoon have talked in some way of traditions and culture. Some say that they no longer speak their language, but many still speak Cree or Ojibway. They are concerned about the loss of the language.

Traditions and cultural activities:

These are other areas that I have picked up as the elders talked. None of these areas were talked about in great detail, but they were mentioned in one or more conversations:

feasts, raindance, sundance, giveaways, pipe ceremonies, sweats, tipis, pow-wows, Flowers Day, funeral attendances and wakes, greeting the Thunderbirds (remembrances of some aspect of this from their parents), firekeepers, feeding the spirits, men and woman's roles and the balancing effects within the communities.

The reason that I think it is important to note these aspects of traditions is that the culture is still very much alive even if not everyone practices or participates in these ceremonies. The fact that people still remember something that a parent or grandparent told them is significant.

Appndix E

TENTATIVE AGENDA

WORKSHOP FOR SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL OLDER LEARNING PROJECT
PRAIRIE CHRISTIAN TRAINING CENTRE
FORT QUAPPELLE SASKATCHEWAN

THEME: ELDERS VISION

DATES: July 11, 12, 13, 1994

Monday July 11, 1994

Welcome of elders as they arrive

7:00 p.m.	**Gathering to say hello to one another over tea and coffee**

Tuesday July 12, 1994

9:00 a.m.	**Prayers** **Drum Group** **Fiddler**
	Introductions
	Coffee
10:00 a.m.	**What do you do in your community?** **Group discussions** **Elders Community Information** **Activities performed in community**
11:00 a.m.	**Group Sharing**
12:00 noon	**Lunch**
	Introduce invited guests during lunch hour
1:30 p.m.	**What do you need to help you in your work?**
	Group discussions
3:00 p.m.	**Coffee**
3:30 p.m.	**Group sharing**

Evening activities: Free time. Videos will be available

Wednesday July 13, 1994.

9:00 a.m.	**Opening Prayers**
	Summary from July 12/94 discussions **Questions and Answers**
10:00 a.m.	**Coffee**
10:15 a.m.	**Which area do you think is the most important for you? (Priorize your choices)**
	Group discussions
	Group sharing
	Who do you think should be responsible for the work required?
	Group sharing
12:00 Noon	**Feast and celebrations**
1:30 p.m	**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**
2:30 p.m.	**Closing Ceremonies**

Appendix F

THE CENTRAL GATHERING REPORT

Saskatchewan Older Aboriginal Learning Needs Gathering Workshop, Prairie Christian Training Centre - July 13/94

Theme: Elder's Vision

Statement:

Family oriented in early life and missed economic development opportunities-not important at that time, formal education came later in life, ie. Upgrading, business college, university

Missed economic development opportunities, not important at that time (early life when raising children), sharing was more important and was emphasized, not mercenary.

Jobs performed by the elders

A: Caregivers and caring for others -
Manager of our homes
Care of children, elders, parents, grandchildren and foster children
Household duties
Water haulers
Canning
Berry pickers
Drivers/chauffeurs for our children
Hunters, gatherers
Gardener, horticulture

(Social and Emotional)
Teachers for our children, values, behavior, spirituality, traditions, medicines
Teach children the value of money
Teach children how to spend and save before they move to university or away from home

B: Domestic
Baby sitting
Housekeeping

Maids
Seamstress
Coaches
Cook

C: Traditional/healing:
Medicine pickers and wrappers
Spiritual advisors recognized elder

D: Organizers for sports events, wakes, funerals

E: Politics:
Counsellors

F: Art/Crafts/Business
Costume makers, traditional dancing costumes,
Blanket makers (star blankets)
Knitting, crochet, sewing, beading, carving
Resort manager

G: Professional areas:
conduct surveys, researchers
Storytellers
Writers - biographies, history, legends, children stories Actresss/performers

Teachers/Instructors (professional)
Teach language - syllabics
Teaching Sunday School

H: Serving on Committees and/or Boards

Trustee for Gabriel Dumont Institute Scholarship
Community Training Resources - women in conflict with the law, GDI Board of Directors, Town council, Library Board, Minor Hockey, Education Committee, Local for Metis Society, Aboriginal RCMP committee,Catholic church committee, Sewing Clubs, CEIC Slam Board, Kapache Centre Board, Metis Women Association
Saskatchewan Metis Society.

Issues:

1. **All work done for no pay for 50-60 years of our lives.**

2. **Never been provision for women in the paid work force.**

3. **No pensions for us 3. No back up services or respite for work with children and elderly care.**

Housing:

1. **No Aboriginal Seniors housing that is subsidized. There are only one bedroom apartments but the Aboriginal Sr. citizens don't live alone (extended family).**

2. **Health: Medical and Transportation: Removal of drug plan means that we suffer.**

3. **Having to pay for our glasses is a hardship.**

4. **No provision made for rural Seniors to get to a Doctor or Dentist.**

5. **Elders who are ill and can't get around require visitors.**

6. **SAIL is gone and this has drastically affected seniors.**

<u>Solutions:</u>

1. **We need economic credit for all the work we've done over all these years.**

2. **First Nations and Metis Senior's subsidized housing that meet our needs.**

3. **Senior First Nation and Metis Nursing home. Some place to belong, some place to go when life is ending or when one is sick and requires care.**

4. **We want some high government official (Romanow) to do our work for 7 days with access to our**

finances/income only, and we'll take their jobs and access to money.

5. Writing workshops to preserve stories, history, legends.

6. Language preservation.

7. Require material and financial resources for crafts.

8. Resource material for cultural preservation

9. Recognition of elders community work through presentation of awards. Knowledge of how to access this information.

10. Elder Workshops:
Workshops to be government sponsored.

    a. on Health of First Nations and Metis, specifically for elders, in areas such as diabetics, TB, etc, and services that are required for elder care such as Geriatric Nurses who are knowledgeable of the culture.

    b. on writing proposals for grant submissions.

    c. on budgeting and how to manage on fixed incomes.

    d. on traditional medicines.

    e. training of language instructors, including writing of syllabics.

    f. workshop for cultural trainees.

    g. on basic literacy and tutoring.

    h. workshop on lobbying

11. Require an Advocacy Program to help elders find out information they require, ie. why such high hydro costs.

12. **Recommend follow up of this workshop.**

PRIORITY FOR WORK TO BE DONE:

1. **Funding to begin developmental work, for workshop activities, housing proposal, etc.**

2. **Lobby First Nations and Metis organization, MLA's and MP's, educational institutions, SUNTEP, ITEP. Who will do it? Extension, in participation with SIFC and GDI.**

   Time Period: 6 MONTHS with cover letter of proposal to organizations send the following letter to the participants and enclose the workshop report.

APPENDIX G

SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN FEDERATED COLLEGE

SIFC Head Office
Piapot Indian Reserve #75
Box 9, R.R. 2, Site 3
Craven, Saskatchewan
Canada S0G 0W0

Ph: (306) 781 - 4559
Fax: (306) 781 - 7006

SIFC - Regina Campus
Room 118, College West
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada S4S 0A2

Ph: (306) 584 - 8333/8334
Fax: (306) 584 - 0955
(306) 585 - 1289

SIFC - Saskatoon Campus
310 - 20th Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Canada S7K 0A7

Ph: (306) 931 - 1800
Fax: (306) 665 - 0175

Extension & Northern Operations
25 - 11th Street E.
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
Canada S6V 0Z8

Ph: (306) 763 - 0066
Fax: (306) 764 - 3511

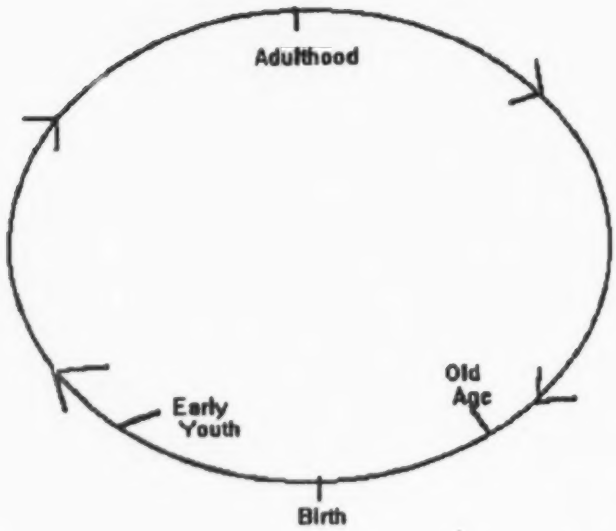
November 4, 1994

"The Elders often say that in life, one is once an adult and twice a child: one is born, becomes and adult and then, in old age, becomes a child once more. Some Elders say that in those first and last stages of life, humans are 'pure spirits', arriving in and departing from the human, terrestrial world. Around the circle of human life, and time, the very old and very young are side by side, as illustrated below. The best positioned to understand and form the children at the deeper social and personal levels are the old. And the least well positioned to perform that task are the adults, the most distant from the children around the Circle".

Thank you for your interest
and inspiritational work!

Georges Sioui

Dr. Georges H. Sioui
Dean of Academics


Adulthood
Old Age
Early Youth
Birth

©

Appendix H

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

OFFICE OF ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT AND DEAN
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

TO: Doris Young, Project Coordinator

FROM: Dr. G.W. Maslany, Chair
Research Ethics Review Committee

DATE: May 30, 1994

Re: Saskatchewan Older Aboriginal Adults Learning Needs Assessment Project.

Please be advised that the committee has considered this proposal and has agreed that it is:

__X__ 1. Acceptable as submitted.
(Note: Only those applications designated in this way have ethical approval for the research on which they are based to proceed).

_____ 2. Acceptable subject to the following changes and precautions:
(Note: These changes must be resubmitted to the Committee and deemed acceptable by it prior to the initiation of the research. Once the changes are regarded as acceptable a new approval form will be sent out indicating it is acceptable as submitted.)

_____ 3. Unacceptable to the Committee as submitted. Please contact the Chair for advise on whether or how the project proposal might be revised to become acceptable (ext. 4161/5186).

G.W. Maslany

/sm

c: Applicant
Academic Unit Head
(Ethics1.Doc)

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA S4S 0A2 PHONE (306) 585-4161 FAX (306) 585-4893
INTERNET: GRADAD@MAX.CC.UREGINA.CA

CELEBRATING YEARS PLUS
BUILDING FUTURES ONE MIND AT A TIME
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix H

HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Application for Approval of Research Procedures

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION AND PURPOSES

Date: April 15, 1994.

Name of Applicant(s) : Doris Young, Project Coordinator, Seniors' Education Centre

Address: Seniors Education Centre, University Extension,University of Regina S4S OA2.

Title of Research: Saskatchewan Older Aboriginal Adults Learning Needs Assessment Project

1. **If the project will be part of a thesis, or class requirement, given the name job the supervisor:**

n/a

3. **Department or Faculty:**

n/a

Purposes. Give a brief outline of the main features and variables of the research problem. Include a brief statement which describes the significance and potential benefits of the study.

This project is designed and proposed in cooperation with the Seniors' Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research Inc., (GDI), and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, (SIFC). The lateness of federal funding required a change in the original project design. The purpose is to address the need for education of older First Nations and Metis (elders), in consultation and with participation from the elders. The coordinator will be working with an Advisory Group of the three parties.

Purpose: This project is more correctly described as providing a forum for a "gathering" of the elders, so that they can share ideas and discuss their educational needs, rather than research. (see attached project proposal for details).

The gathering will provide the ideas, and the direction of how their needs will be met.

Section 11: Subjects:

1. Briefly describe the number and kind of subjects required for data collection.

The purpose is not to collect data, but to provide an opportunity for the elders to talk to one another. From the dialogue with one another, the elders will give voice to the ideas and issues that are important in their lives. It will only be then that we can begin to assess their educational needs.

The 2 1/2 day gathering will take place in a culturally appropriate setting, in a location suggested by the Advisory Committee.

Approximately 20 elders will be accommodated in this gathering from First Nations and Metis communities, as well as from the City of Regina. The participants will be selected by the community themselves. In order to get this selection, the coordinator will be visiting 7-10 communities for their input into the selection process, as well as to tell them of the project.

2. What information about the research problem and their role in the project will potentials subjects given?

Consultation and participation are key to the success of this project. The Advisory Committee and the coordinator will work together on the procedures to follow in arranging the gathering to ensure cultural sensitivity and respect for the elders.

All participants will be given information about the purpose of the project and they will be informed that the project is sponsored in cooperation with the Seniors Education Centre, University of Regina, the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and , with funding from Health, Canada, Seniors Independence Program.

3. How will the consent of the subjects to participate be obtained?

All participants will be given necessary information about the purpose, sponsors and funders of the project prior to the gathering.

The coordinator will have met with the elders in their communities so they would already know about the project. Participant selection will be made jointly by the community and elders and all those who attend the gathering will do so because of their interest in the project.

4. What will the subjects be required to do in the course of the project?

The participants will be invited to attend the gathering where they will have an opportunity to participate in processes led by a culturally sensitive , trained facilitator. The process will allow for healthy interaction between the elders to discuss their needs in general and educational needs particularly. Some of these ideas will be based on story telling.

5. What assurances will the subjects be given and what precautions will be taken regarding the confidentiality of the data or information which the provide in the study?

All the knowledge received at the gathering will be shared for this primary purpose of elders having an opportunity to name and talk about their needs including educational and learning needs. No confidential information will be asked of the participants.

6. Will children be used as a source of data?

No.

7. Will the researcher or any member of the research team be in a position of power or authority in relation to the subjects.

The primary function of the project staff, the coordinator and the Advisory Committee is to facilitate the gathering. Consultation and participation throughout the project will ensure that their is no undue use of or inappropriate use of power or authority relationship within the process or organization of the project. Knowledge will be shared rather than held.

8. Will deception of any kind be necessary in the project?

No.

Section III: Access to data and findings

1. Who will have access to the original data of the study?

The information will be documented for public accountability. All information related to the project and its developments will be made public and available to the participants, the Seniors' Education Centre, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, funders, as well as the larger public.

2. Will subjects have some access to the finding of the study?

Yes.

3. What will be the final disposition of the original data after the study is completed?

The final project report and recommendations will be distributed to participants, Seniors Education Centre, funders and all other stakeholders. The final report and recommendation will be a public document.

Signature of Applicant(s)

_____

_____

Signature of Advisor or Instructor:

_____

_____

Appendix I

OLDER ABORIGINAL ADULTS LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MAILING LIST

JULY 11-13, 1994

GRACE HATFIELD
BOX 157
MARCELINK, SASKATCHEWAN
S0J 1R0

JESSIE DIETER
PEEPKISIS RES.,
BALCARRES, SASKATCHEWAN
S0G 0C0

MINNIE DANIELS
STARBLANKET BAND
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S0G 0C0

CLARA PASQUA
GENERAL DELIVERY
FORT QU'APPELLE, SASKATCHEWAN
S0G 1S0

FLORENCE DESJARLAIS
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FORT QU'APPELLE, SASKATCHEWAN
S0G 1S0

FLORENCE DESNOMIE
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S0G 2Y0

STELLA GOODWILL
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S4T 4Y8

IRMA TAYLOR
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JEAN GOODWILL
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RES.
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DORIS YOUNG
SEC,
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION,
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA,
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RUTH BLASER
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UNIVERSITY OF REGINA,
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JOSEPHINE ROSS
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Appendix J

Facilitators:

Irma Taylor. Irma is Metis and she is presently in charge of Marketing and Promotions at the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Regina Saskatchewan. She is the elected Secretary of the Riel Local of Regina, Saskatchewan Metis Association. She also is member of the Regina Parent Aid Board.

Doris Young. Doris is Cree from northern Manitoba. She is a member of the Lac la Ronge Band. She has taught at the University of Manitoba, in the Native Studies Department and is Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies, University of Winnipeg. Her interest has always been in working with Aboriginal people in the development of culturally appropriate and community based programs.

Ruth Blaser. Ruth's professional background is in adult education, community development and pastoral ministry. Currently she is the Project Manager for the Cross Cultural Intergenerational Project. This project works at Anti-Racism Training and Education in the Touchwood, File Hills, Qu'Appelle district.